

An

Essay on

THE DUTIES OF THE

ACCOUCHEUR

*Respectfully submitted to the Faculty
of the*

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for the Degree of Doctor of Medicine

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R.I.

Well has some one said
that the "Art of medicine is
at once sublime and really
divine". In no profes-
sion will more opportu-
nities arise for the
exercise of the higher and
holier sentiments than
in this.

To stand guard over
the health of the com-
munity in which he
is located - giving notice
of the approach of the

2

enemy against whom
he has enlisted to wage
perpetual war.—

He make known the
best means of escape—
or himself to manfully
battle against its in-
sidious, or overt attacks,
will sufficiently familiar-
ize the discriminating
physician with the
different types of char-
acter— their beauties and
their deformities— their

80
wants and their ca-
pacities - and will im-
press upon him the
two great lessons of
prudence and charity.

His duties will consist
in preventing or mitiga-
ting pain, promoting
~~usefulness~~ - staying the
hand of death - or when
this is beyond his power,
in gently communicating
the tidings of approaching
dissolution.

But the general practitioner has special duties to perform - while his general duty may be to help people out of the world - he has another, more pleasant, but sometimes quite as embarrassing work to do in helping them into it; and it is this subject that I propose to treat in this essay.

^{and} The Obstetrician should

5
bear in mind when
called to preside over
the process which is to
add another "responsi-
bility" to the world - and
to himself at that time
in particular, that he
has not to do with
ordinary disease, and
indeed very probably
he will find nothing
that may be called dis-
ease, or that requires the
prescription of medicine

at all, or to intrude
artificial assistance of
any kind, but, that he
is summoned to witness
a natural function
of the female system,
for which, in ordinary
cases, nature has made
as ample provision,
as for the perform-
ance of other natural
phenomena; and it
is particularly impor-
tant that, by our con-

2
versation and deport-
ment we impress
this fact upon the
mind of our patient
and her friends; but
as in other functions
nature sometimes
fails, and it becomes
necessary to assist
her, so likewise she
fails in performing
the beautiful func-
tion of parturition
regularly and requires

to be assisted by art.

And in the exercise of proper judgment in discriminating in this regard perhaps more than in any other resides the difference in the relative success of different practitioners of the obstetrical art.

It is at this point especially that the Homoeopathic accoucheur, when he reflects how

9
great his advantages
are over those "who having
eyes, see not and having
ears, hear not" the great
truths discovered to
the world by the im-
mortal Hahnemann,
he feels ready to exclaim
as did that remark-
able man of science
(Archimedes) eureka!
eureka! —

It is not necessary, nor
even advisable during

the first stage of labor, for
the accoucheur to remain
in the room with the
patient, or even, in the
house, if the progress is
slow; but he should be
very careful before leav-
ing her, to satisfy him-
self that all is right, and
that every thing is in
readiness for the expected
delivery; and it would
be well to give some
general directions to

the nurse.

In regard to confining the patient - I think the most rational and natural course to pursue is, to allow her during the first stage of labor (especially if it commence in the day time) to get up, walk about the apartment, sit in a chair, rest on the sofa when tired, or pursue some light

12
occupation if she be
able to do so.

Much depends upon
keeping her tranquil
and cheerful; and it
is important that she
should be told of all
that is favorable in
her case, and all sub-
jects calculated to depress
her spirits should be
carefully avoided.

In this matter very
much depends upon

the female attendants,
who should receive
proper instructions
and cautions.

I am fully satisfied that in most,
if not in all cases
and here I will add,
that it is not confined
to obstetrics alone but
I believe the rule
will apply in almost
all cases which come
under his professional

care from whatever cause) it is best to deal frankly and honestly with our patients and not encourage false hopes under the mistaken view of thereby benefiting them.

If it be a primary case and the case is simply tedious, let her be so informed, and that, as far as we can

judge, the labor will
 terminate safely to
 herself and child, and
 she will bear to hear
 that she has yet some
 time to suffer, and
 that she will have
 a fine opportunity
 to exercise the virtue
 which Job so pre-
 eminently displayed

There is ~~no~~ think
 but very little for the
 physician to do if the

case be one of purely
natural labor, and
the attendant circum-
stances favorable.

Much judgment
and caution are re-
quired in our inter-
ference, or we shall
convert the most sim-
ple case into a labor-
ious or even danger-
ous one. To conduct
labor with safety, it is
necessary that the

practitioner should be acquainted with every phenomena; if he is not, he will not know when certain of them are wanting, or when others are in excess; he cannot estimate the relative importance of each; the force and effect of the pains, the necessity of preserving or rupturing the membranes; the

degree of resistance
which the os uteri, or
external parts may
offer; he will be unable
to ascertain precisely
the presentation, or
know the best method
of correcting any error
in the same; or the
proper time to do it.

And above all he should
be able to pursue a firm,
candid, but feeling con-
duct — that, on the one

hand, he may not be
 betrayed into the in-
 discretion of premature
 interference, nor, on the
 other, on account of inde-
 cision, to permit the
 right time to pass when
 manual, or instrumen-
 tal assistance should
 be employed; thus per-
 haps allowing compli-
 cations to occur which
 will retard or increase
 the severity of the labor

19
20
or endanger the life
of the mother, or child,
or may be both.

It is always well
when we are called to
see a patient sup-
posed to be in labor, to
obey the summons as
soon as possible; the
reasons for doing so
are, first, our prompt-
ness will give the
patient a favorable
opinion of our interest

in her welfare, and,
Sec. it will give us
the earliest opportunity
to rectify any malpo-
sition, or remedy un-
pleasant complications
that are liable to be met
with in any given
case.